

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The First Years

CONE hundred years ago this week on June 27, 1829, in the little settlement already known as Carbondale, there was perfected a church organization known as the First Presbyterian Church (or Church Society) of Carbondale.

The facts constituting the background of this organization are of vital importance to every member of this church, to this community and to this commonwealth, for wrapped about the early church history is the history of the great anthracite mining industry and the tales of adventure and hardship lived and told on these our own familiar hill-lands.

When our sixth President, John Quincy Adams, son of the second President of the United States, ran for re-election in 1828, he was defeated by Andrew Jackson, the warrior, who had not only won the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, but who had also taken part in the Revolution and been held a prisoner by the British. Soon after Jackson's inauguration in 1829, while that newspaper, "The Liberator," (edited by Wm. Lloyd Garrison), favoring freedom of slaves in the South, created a furor and was considered "a wild idea," another stir was holding the attention of the country—the mining operations in the valley of the Lackawanna by a company incorporated six years before as "The President, Managers and Company of the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company."

The eyes of the country were turned toward this valley and the activities on these hillsides became matters of great concern to the eastern public.

What had happened here?

As early as 1814, perhaps, two Philadelphia merchants, William Wurts and his brother Maurice, had explored this valley and probably by 1822 had mined coal here and shipped it to Philadelphia via sled from here to the Lackawaxen and thence down the Delaware River on rafts. Owing to the competition of the more accessible Lehigh Company, "another market" was considered and the possibility of reaching New York held their attention.